

Vázquez Montalbán (por citar uno entre varios posibles), debería serlo también.

En cuanto a la muy corta selección ofrecida de los del 82, no se justifica en absoluto: ni la cortedad ni las clamorosas ausencias. O se justifica por prejuicios ideológicos: ¿por qué un poeta de tan escaso interés (formal y de contenido) como Martínez Mesanza y no un poeta de tan extremado rigor conceptual y fuerza crítica como Jorge Riechmann (nacido en 1962, tiene siete libros publicados)? Respuesta: porque García Martín privilegia el conservadurismo formal e ideológico que ejemplifica Mesanza y que puede ejemplificar Trapiello, y deja fuera de la selección a los poetas más arriesgados como Riechmann, Juan Carlos Súnen (1956) o Concha García (1956). Si no es así, el antólogo debería reflexionar sobre una manera de seleccionar que lo lleva a ocultar a poetas que representan con lucidez y vigor otras formas de hacer, ocultando su existencia a quienes podrían obtener de ellos, también, emoción, gusto, fruición.

La introducción en que pasa revista a la producción poética publicada entre 1965 y 1995, y a sus generaciones, tendencias y características, demuestra su excelente agudeza crítica y su nunca descartado sectarismo: conduce con precisión y claridad por entre un bosque de referencias poéticas... y se deja fuera, como por acaso, las tendencias que no le placen y los autores que lo pillan a trasmano. De su lectura avisada se pueden obtener algunos conocimientos serios y ajustados; de la ingenua, un paisaje relativamente falso y engañoso.

En fin, García Martín debería ajustar sus criterios críticos: una cosa es reflexionar sobre una tendencia o antologizarla; otra, tratar de explicarse acerca de (y de seleccionar de entre) toda la poesía escrita en un determinado período.

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Susan L. Fischer, ed. *Self-Conscious Art: A Tribute to John Kronik*. Lewisburg Pa, Bucknell University Press, 1996, 183 pp.

While there are problems in this ten-piece collection, the individual essays, all (more or less) dealing with the broad question of «self-conscious art,» are almost uniformly excellent. Too often, the quality of essays in an edition of this sort is uneven, as readers find some of the studies insightful and others not. Yet such is not the case with this tribute to John Kronik.

The contributors show their dazzling talent at capturing layers of meaning to literary and other artistic texts: Harold Boudreau's elaboration («Rewriting Unamuno Rewriting Galdós») of the ways Unamuno replicates, competes with (à la Harold Bloom in *Anxiety of Influence*), and

counterposes various works of Galdós, demonstrates precisely the specific ways in which literature draws from literature. Boudreau's explanations of one form of intertextuality in comparison to other forms are extremely lucid. Nancy Newton's «Playing with Unamunian Paper Birds,» is an equally close reading of Unamuno that convinces her readers (at least this one) that the solemn rector of Salamanca could be as playful and frivolous, as the most subversive practitioner of the vanguard art of his day. Also interesting about Newton's analysis is the case she makes for Unamuno's interrogation of the traditional oppositions of western (male) culture: «nature/culture, self/other, fiction/reality, male/female» (47-48).

Newton is not the only critic in the collection dealing with self-consciousness and gender. Both Roberta Johnson («Self-Consciousness in Rosa Chacel and María Zambrano») and Maryellen Bieder («Self-Reflective Fiction and the Discourses of Carmen de Burgos») discuss the cultural production of women of early twentieth-century Spain, all of whom experienced similar if not identical cultural phenomena: the intellectual presence of Ortega y Gasset, a taste for linguistic playfulness, and an acute awareness of the act of signification in the very act of writing. So much so, that a literary historian might even call them members of a generation. Johnson pinpoints an explicit distinction drawn by Zambrano and implicit in Chacel between confessional and autobiographical writing alluding to the bodily interventions of both suggesting a female aesthetic in their self-conscious differentiation with their male counterparts. Moreover, their critique of Ortega's insistence on women's essence (in Burgos as well) is of interest in the implication of an anxiety of authorship in conjunction with Boudreau's (by way of Blooms) anxiety of influence. Woman's essence is also a part of Bieder's discussion of Burgos's novella, *La entrometida*. Indeed, Burgos uses the playfulness and frivolity of the Bohemian (or pseudo-Bohemian) writing of that time to debunk that very writing. Gender construction is ultimately the object of her social critique as male and female characters read each other exclusively within the confines of received linguistic constructs.

Continuing chronologically toward the contemporary period with a study of Juan Goytisolo and Carlos Fuentes («Self-Conscious Narration and Christian Discourse in Goytisolo and Fuentes»), Robert Spire also discusses self-conscious art as an act of subversion of occidental belief, thought, and writing. By the sixth essay, however, the collection turns back to the future, with two suggestive articles on Spanish Golden Age culture, «Page-Gazing through Subversive Staging: Calderón and 'L'Illusion Cinématographique'» by Susan Fischer and Mary Gaylord's «Yo el Soneto: Cervantes's Poetics of Cenotaph». Both these essays manifest the fruits of recasting old texts in the light of the language and culture revolutions that have become definitive markers of literary studies as we approach the millennium. Fischer details how Calderón's *Antes que todo*

*es mi dama* was staged by Adolfo Marsillach in 1987, a staging that pinpoints for Fischer the post-modern dimension of the earlier play, a play in which no act of communication or molding of identity is left unquestioned. Both Fischer's and Gaylord's articles suggest the symmetrical relationship between the so called «Age of Cervantes» and the intellectual crisis of our present cultural moment in which all signification is slippery and politically (imperial)ly motivated. Gaylord's reading of Cervantes's sonnet as a cenotaph is remarkable in its refusal never to tread far outside the concrete historical moment of its writing, a consideration that actually adds complexity to the poem's signification. That Gaylord was able to use exclamation marks felicitously as she discovered yet deeper layers of meaning in the sonnet belies what some may say about the boredom of the age —both the Golden one and the present in which lamentably nothing— or so they say —can fashion itself as «new».

The last two essays, «From the Transcendental to the Supernatural: Kant and the Doctors» by Marshall Brown and Marvin Carlson's «Murderous Games: The Self-Conscious Art of the Comedy Thriller,» albeit illuminating —Carlson's entertaining—, have nothing to do with Hispanic literature yet much to do with the crisis of signification. Brown provides understanding of a beginning modern impulse toward self-consciousness in a dimension of Kantian philosophy that poses transcendental dimensions of thought, «the transcendental ego,» a «forbidden territory» that manifests itself in Kant's lesser known followers as well as in a literary fascination with the darkness of the mind: Shelly's *Frankenstein* and the works of Poe. In Carlson's piece self-consciousness moves from the gothic to dramatic comedy of the 1980's whose staging techniques have the effect of winking at the spectator suggesting that they are part of a process of (re)signification in their employment of the conventions of murder mysteries.

The glaring problem with this study is almost too obvious to mention: the fact that whatever unity there might be to the multifarious issues of self-consciousness, it is clearly not a part of the study as a whole. The connections are left to the reader, and while the editors seem to pose the figure of John Kronik as the logocentric unifier, he-it is not enough. I believe this is a serious flaw considering that it is the editor's responsibility at least to attempt to draw the lines of connection in the form of a critical introduction. Paradoxically, the worst essay in the collection is the one that should have been the lengthiest and the most penetrating. Andrew Debicki's and Susan Fischer's «Introduction: John Kronik, Self-Conscious Art, and the Mainstream of (Hispanic) Criticism» is a perfunctory summary of each article with very little, if any, elaboration. The cumbersome parenthetical «(Hispanic)» speaks for itself. Two of the studies cover non-Hispanic texts exclusively. Only two deal with something we might call the present moment of cultural production —although Spires's treatment of *Juan sin tierra*, *Aura*, and *Artemio Cruz* may be seen

as old by now. And while the rest could be cast as new readings of old tests, there is nothing in the collection that addresses this issues theoretically. My suggestion to readers is to consider this book a receptacle for a group of articles of extremely high quality, each interesting in its own right.

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Francisco Umbral. *Los cuadernos de Luis Vives*. Barcelona: Planeta, 1996. 188 pp.

No puede menos que prometer mucho un libro de memorias de Umbral sobre el Valladolid de su infancia y adolescencia, especialmente cuando recibe en la contraportada un encomio editorial hiperbólico: «A partir de unos cuadernos escolares (sello Luis Vives)... Francisco Umbral ha escrito esta memoria total de la adolescencia y la provincia, definitiva por su interiorización de gentes y tiempos, flaubertiana como crónica de la provincia, obra maestra del primer memorialista español de hoy». La notable fotografía que ilustra la cubierta, una foto de la madre del autor tomada en 1935, año del nacimiento de su hijo, despierta la curiosidad, al igual que otras fotografías que se intercalan en el texto. Lástima que no veamos nunca las anotaciones del muchacho adolescente, sino que el arqueólogo de sí mismo (como se describe el autor maduro) las utiliza como secreto catalizador de sus memorias. Lo que va surgiendo es un relato tenue y escueto, frágil y deshilvanado, que no consigue sacar al pasado de una penumbra en que la alusión y los nombres, el adjetivo y los juicios melancólicos no substituyen la narración sostenida y detallada que una memoria «definitiva» hubiera requerido. Umbral nos da una clave de esta tendencia a la evocación en vez de a la creación de un mundo narrativo cuando afirma haber preferido en sus lecturas juveniles a los prosistas líricos, añadiendo, «No me interesaron nunca las historias» (134). Quizás la mejor descripción de estas memorias la provea el mismo Umbral: «Todo lo que he dado a la vida y la literatura son los escombros de la frustración de un poeta lírico» (170). Estos cuadernos tienen mucho de escombros líricos.

El texto comienza y acaba con una evocación de la madre del autor, primero como secretaria del Consistorio y luego en su lecho de muerte. Entre estas dos evocaciones fugaces, apenas apunta una figura que no acaba de surgir. Umbral observa que ha hablado de ella en numerosos otros textos y que quisiera dar aquí, «en este libro de las verdades» (14), la madre real. La tercera oración del párrafo en que intenta el retrato de su madre, sin embargo, comienza ya con «Yo» y pasa a contar como al acompañarla a su oficina Umbral podía ir a la biblioteca municipal que se encontraba en el mismo edificio. Sigue una descripción de esta